



Family Mealtime

- ★ **Why Family Mealtime is Important.**
- ★ **Tips on Planning & Preparing Family Mealtime.**
- ★ **Family Mealtime Activities.**
- ★ **Mealtime Brochures, Activities, and Handouts to download.**
- ★ **Links to other Family Mealtime Sites.**



Family Meals: Eat Better, Eat Together

The W.I.C. program wants to help all families come together at the dinner table for better nutrition and quality family time. Take a minute to find out why it is important and how to Eat Better, Eat Together.

★ *Eating together is important because...*

- Research has shown that families who eat together eat healthier meals
- It makes good use of food supplies by cooking larger quantities
- We use time better by planning menus and preparing only one meal
- Family communication improves
- It Increases sense of security and stability in children
- It Helps children do better in school and behave better
- We give a sense of family traditions and values
- Children learn and have fun by helping prepare meals

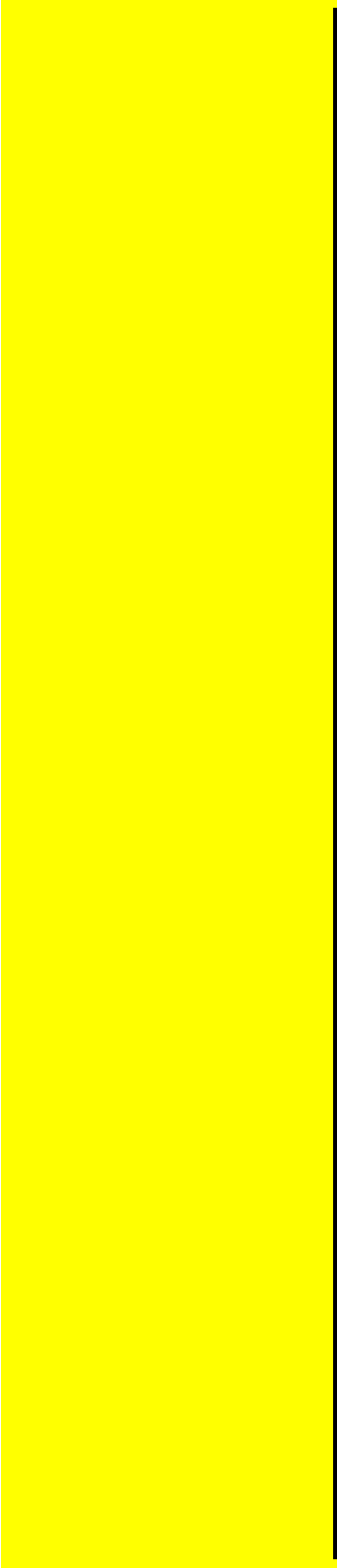
★ *Helpful Hints On Planning and Preparing Family Mealtime*

- Talk with family members about *how* to set up your family mealtime: What you want to eat? What time is best? What to talk about? What not to talk about? What behavior is OK, what is not?


- Planning family dinner menus in advance (a week, a pay period, a month, etc). will save time and avoid costly last-minute dinners out or pizza orders.
- Start with just **one** meal a week and add more as you can. Take time to make that meal extra special!
- Keep foods on hand for 2-3 quick, favorite recipes. Make large amounts of these items and freeze for later.
- Involve **all** members of the family in *planning* and *preparing* the menu. Children enjoy helping in the kitchen and are often more willing to eat foods that they help prepare.
- Family meals do not have to be hard. Simple foods will do!
- Involve the entire family in the clean-up. Make a chore chart and take turns. Listen to music so clean-up goes faster.

★ ***Mealtime Activities***

- **Restaurant Night.** Pretend you are at a restaurant and give every member of your family a role to play (example: one person takes orders, one person serves the food, etc.) Turn the lights off and eat by candlelight or put flowers on the table.
- **Have alphabet dinners.** For example, on “A” night feature asparagus, apples, or avocado. Family members can learn about new foods.
- **Geography Night.** Pick a country to learn about and prepare foods that come from that country. Have each person learn one fact about the country to share at dinnertime.
- **Special Spotlight.** Choose a family member to be in the spotlight. Have a special plate that the VIP (very important person) uses when they are in the spotlight. Let them set the menu.

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- **Game Night.** Make individual pizzas using English muffins and then play a game. Take turns choosing the game.
 - **Family Breakfast.** Dinner isn't the only time to share meals. Breakfast is also a great time to sit down together and start the day out right!

For more information on the *Eat Better, Eat Together* program, click [here](http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/nutrition/NEN/Activities/main.html).



Link to...

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